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SUBJECT: CDMA 2008: CANADA TO HIGHLIGHT NEW FOCUS ON THE
AMERICAS

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Classified By: DCM Terry Breese, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Canada will highlight its renewed focus on the Americas at the Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas (CDMA) 2008 in Banff, September 2-6. Canadian officials look forward to a robust U.S. presence at the CDMA and want to collaborate with the U.S. to ensure that the Declaration calls for concrete, measurable progress in regional security, capacity building, and governance; and to translate the Declaration into action in other venues such as the OAS. Canada's new, but not yet Cabinet-approved, hemispheric defense strategy will guide its engagement at the CDMA. The strategy looks to the southern cone for strategic partners, to the Andean region with an emphasis on counterterrorism and counternarcotics, and to the Caribbean with a view towards increasing security. It is silent so far on Cuba. Canada is keen to expand Latin American participation in the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti, and is looking for ways to partner with Mexico to advance regional and global defense and security. The Canadians hope to leverage their considerable support for the 2010 CDMA in Bolivia into an effort by that country to stifle Venezuelan, Ecuadorian, and Nicaraguan mischief-making in Banff. End summary.

¶2. (C) Canadian Prime Minister Harper's new Americas strategy focuses on enhancing prosperity, democratic governance, and security via increased trade, aid, and defense and security engagement that delivers tangible, measurable results. The September 2-6 Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas (CDMA) is one of five high-profile events in 2008 meant to underscore Harper's assertion that "Canada is back" and is prepared to strengthen its engagement in the hemisphere. To that end, other high profile events this year include the state visits of the presidents of Brazil and Chile, the visit of CARICOM leaders, and the meeting of the Caribbean Development Bank in Canada.

Canada's CDMA Goals

13. (C) Canadian officials have emphasized privately that their goals for the CDMA align with those put forward by the U.S. Canada wishes to demonstrate its leadership at the Conference by promoting regional security, defense and security capacity building, and training and governance in the hemisphere. More specifically, Canada plans to join the U.S. in pressing others to reach consensus on the need to improve domain awareness, develop professional civilian expertise at defense ministries, promote confidence and security-building measures, and seek endorsement of and participation in the 2009 Western Hemisphere Regional Operational Experts Group Meeting.

14. (C) Canadian officials are keen to collaborate with U.S. officials in devising ways to use the CDMA's Banff Declaration to win concrete, measurable progress in other venues such as the OAS. Further, they have stressed the importance of a robust U.S. presence at the meeting because, they say, the CDMA is "useful only to the extent that the U.S. plays an important role in it." QU.S. plays an important role in it."

Hemispheric Defense Engagement Strategy

15. (C) Since 2007, Department of National Defence (DND) officials have worked to translate the PM's strategic guidance for the hemisphere into its Defense Engagement Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean. The current -- but not yet approved by Cabinet -- draft strategy looks to the Caribbean with a greater security focus, to the Andean Region with an emphasis on counter-narcotics and counterterrorism, and to the Southern Cone for partners with whom Canada can engage the rest of the hemisphere and beyond. It articulates the need to leverage Canada's strong

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relations with its continental partners, the U.S. and Mexico, to promote regional security, defense & security capacity building, and training and governance throughout the hemisphere. It does not, however, come with a near- or mid-term increase in funding.

16. The DND Strategy groups South and Central American and Caribbean countries according to four 'Defense Engagement Levels' of varying importance from Strategic Partnership at the top, to Defense Cooperation, Defense Contact and, finally, Defense Interest.

-- Strategic Partnership: Applies to countries capable of making important contributions to regional and international peace and security, and integral to advancing Canada's interests at the regional or global level. Canada will seek close defense relations with these countries across the spectrum of engagement, including high-level visits, staff talks, combined training and exercises, and urge interoperability with Canadian forces. This short list of capable potential strategic partners includes Argentina, Brazil and Chile.

-- Defense Cooperation: Applies to countries of lesser capability with whom DND will seek to promote warm defense relations and partial interoperability. Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Peru, Trinidad & Tobago and Uruguay comprise the list.

-- Defense Contact: Applies to countries with whom activities provide little or no benefit to the Canadian forces. Engagement is limited to the understanding of tactics and procedures, military confidence-building measures, etc. The list includes Barbados, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

-- Defense Interest: Applies to countries meriting minimal to non-existent defense-related activities, but about which

Canada hopes to gain defense and security awareness. They are The Bahamas, Costa Rica, Guyana, Haiti, Panama, Paraguay, Surinam and all Eastern Caribbean countries not named above. The draft Strategy is silent on Cuba.

Haiti

¶ 17. (C) Ottawa accepts that Canada and the U.S. will remain the top two donors in Haiti and that both countries will have to stay engaged for the long haul in order to deal with endemic security and health risks, including drugs, trafficking, and poverty. Canadian aid to Haiti amounts to a five-year, \$555 million commitment, making it Canada's number-two aid priority after Afghanistan. Canada is keen to maintain, and to expand, the current international -- and particularly Latin American -- involvement in the UN peacekeeping operation in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

Mexico

¶ 18. (C) Realism, gradualism, and sensitivity are the watchwords guiding Canadian engagement with Mexico. The "awkward but useful" 2007 political-military talks looked at, but made little progress on, bilateral collaboration on non-proliferation, peacekeeping operations, counterterrorism, and increased cooperation in the OAS and the UN. In particular, the Canadians pressed the Mexicans lightly on peacekeeping, trying unsuccessfully to pique their interest in contributing to MINUSTAH. The Canadians are keen to collaborate quietly with the U.S. on Mexican engagement. They agree with DOD DASD Johnson's assertion that now is "moment of opportunity" when maturing democracies are prepared to partner with the U.S. and Canada to shape the economic, security and ideological spaces in order to keep more Latin American countries from going the way of Venezuela and Bolivia.

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Venezuela and Bolivia

¶ 19. (C) Canada hopes to leverage its considerable mentoring and financial support of the Bolivia-hosted 2010 CDMA into that country's help to stifle Venezuelan antics and negative influences in Banff. According to DND officials, Canada and Bolivia have a "politically useful understanding" that the two will depend on each other to ensure that both the 2008 and 2010 CDMA are successful. This "understanding" obliges Bolivia to work against any potential Venezuelan effort to block consensus on the CDMA Declaration and, as the Canadians put it, to keep Ecuador and Nicaragua from "screwing up the process."

Logistics

¶ 110. (C) U.S. Ambassador to Canada David Wilkins will participate in the CDMA September 2-4. Defence Minister Peter MacKay will host the September 2-6 CDMA and participate in bilateral meetings, while the top career civilian at DND, Deputy Minister Robert Fonberg, will serve as the Canadian delegation head to the CDMA. DND Assistant Deputy Minister for Political Affairs Vincent Rigby will join the CDMA Secretariat. Because most CHODs do not plan to travel to Banff, Chief of Defense Staff General Walter Natynczyk will be present on September 2-3 only.

Comment

¶ 111. (C/NF) Whether and to what extent Canada's no-nonsense

Prime Minister perceives that his strategic vision for the hemisphere has been advanced at the CDMA will determine to a considerable degree his willingness to direct more resources to defense engagement in the region. The broader ramifications of success, or failure, in this matter are therefore behind Canada's concerted effort to ensure that mischief-makers do not disrupt the CDMA. As is the effort to ensure that the Declaration translates into concrete, measurable outcomes at the OAS and other defense and security venues in the hemisphere.

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